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ABSTRACT

In the past, many family planning and population organizations have paid relatively little attention to black fears of birth control coercion and to the writings, speeches, and attitudes that have resulted. Nor have they considered the history and reasons for black sensitivity on the subject of planned family size. This bulletin puts some of these issues and concepts into context within the American scene. It explores the present spectrum of opinion among black leaders and the cultural and political backgrounds that have influenced current thought. The responses of blacks in putting family planning into practice are also outlined, together with some probable trends in family size. It is concluded that, at present, black women are more influenced in the practice of rejection of family planning methods by the practical considerations of bearing and raising children than by any abstract political and philosophical questions on either side. But, some black men may look at issues differently. A New England study indicates that black males under 30 are both more likely to concur with the genocide-conspiracy theory and be more hesitant about condoning the limitation of black family size than are older black males. (Author/JM)

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Population Bulletin

Family Size And the Black American

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Family Size and the Black American

Page

Black perspective 4
- Outside control: a backdrop of fear 4
- Early moral, economic, and political debates on birth control 5
- The influence of minority status 7

Present spectrum of black opinion 8
- The establishment 9
- Women's groups 11
- Radicals, nationalists, and special interest groups 13

Identifying some family size issues 15
- Coercion: the basic concern 15
- The politics of numbers 16
- The politics of opposition 18

Present black family size and trends 18
- Opinion polls 19
- Fertility 19
- Family planning practices 23
- Possible demographic results 24

Outlook 26

References 27

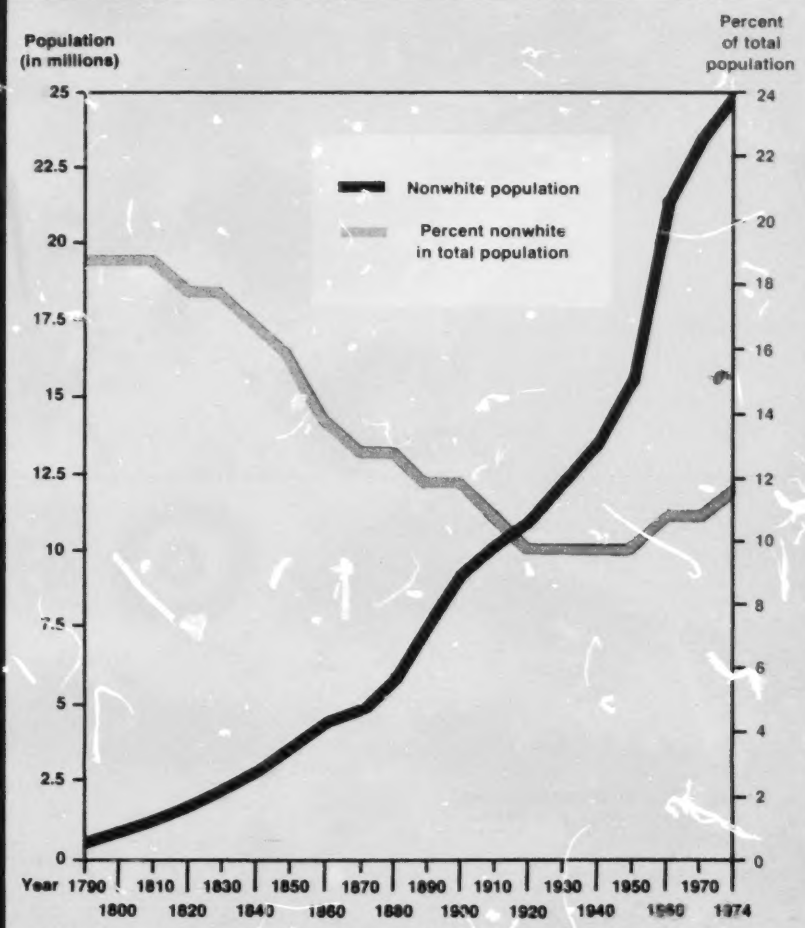
Figures

1. Nonwhite population of the United States, 1790 through 1974, by number and precent 2
2. General fertility rates by race, 1920 through 1973 20
3. Number of children ever born per 1,000 women 35 to 39 years of age, by race and education, 1970 22
4. Total births expected per 1,000 wives, by race and age group, 1971 and 1974 23
5. Percent change in types of contraceptives used by married couples, by race, 1965 and 1970 25

Tables

1. Percent of blacks agreeing with statements related to the genocide issue by region, sex, and age, 1972 10
2. The 10 U.S. cities of 200,000 or more with the highest percentages of blacks, by rank, 1970 17
3. Percent of positive responses to questions about government aid to birth control programs, by race, 1971 19

Figure 1. Nonwhite Population of the United States, 1790 through 1974, by Number and Percent



Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960) p. 9.
U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, 1974*, Current Population Reports, Series P–23, No. 54 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975) p. 11.

Family Size And the Black American

In recent years, while all segments of American society have engaged in debate about population problems, citizens of African descent have expressed an especially wide range of opinion concerning "birth control," "planned parenthood," and allied terms. On the one hand, respected Afro-American members of Congress and officials of "established" organizations, while insisting on freedom of choice in the matter, have encouraged blacks to plan family size. On the other hand, spokesmen identified with black nationalist or revolutionary groups have often promulgated the controversial idea that birth control programs constitute a thinly disguised white plot to commit genocide against people of African extraction.

Discussion of the subject has often been excited. On at least one occasion black denunciations of birth control have been translated into violence when a family planning clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, was burned by persons convinced that planned parenthood meant genocide.[1]

Nevertheless, many family planning and population organizations have, in the past, paid relatively little attention to black fears of birth control coercion and to the writings, speeches, and attitudes that have resulted. Nor have they considered the history, roots, and reasons for black sensitivity on the subject of planned family size.

This bulletin will try to put some of these issues and concepts into context on the American scene. It explores the present spectrum of opinion among black leaders and the cultural and political backgrounds that have influenced current thought. The responses of blacks in putting family planning into practice are also outlined, together with some probable trends in family size.

First, however, the terminology must be clarified. For the purposes of this bulletin, the terms "birth control" (initially coined by Margaret Sanger), "family planning," and "planned parenthood" are used synonymously. All may be defined as "voluntary planning and action by individuals to have the number of children they want, when and if they want them."[2] On the other hand, "population control" identifies the belief that, for the good of society in light of overpopulation, individuals and groups should reduce the number of children they produce. Other authors, however, may have used terms differently, and each quotation in this study should be examined carefully to

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This *Bulletin* was prepared by the staff of the Population Reference Bureau, Inc. Much of it was adapted from the book *Genocide? Birth Control and the Black American*—by Robert G. Weisbord, Professor of History at the University of Rhode Island. The book, which treats the subject under discussion much more comprehensively, is to be published early this fall by Greenwood Press and the Two Continents Publishing Company.

determine the intended meaning. Perhaps a certain residue of confusion is inevitable in view of the emotional and sensitive nature of the subject.

Black Perspective

When Daniel Moynihan described the Negro family in America in a report subtitled "The Case for National Action,"[3] he aroused not only heated and protracted argument but considerable anger among blacks that anyone proposed "national action" on black family structure. This anger harks back to slave days when other persons than blacks themselves controlled family size and configuration — the slave owners.

Outside Control: A Backdrop of Fear

Before the Civil War the black slave family was a precarious institution existing at the sufferance of the master. Husbands and wives, parents and children could be separated forever by an owner's finances, business considerations, or whims. Money almost always took precedence over humanitarian factors.

Not infrequently slaves were mated as if they were livestock. Historian Frederick Bancroft wrote that "next to the great and quick profit from bringing virgin soil under cultivation, slave-rearing was the surest, most remunerative, and most approved means of increasing agricultural capital."[4]

Rewards were given to unusually procreative slave women. Some in Virginia were promised freedom after they bore a specified number of children, and apparently there were many cases of extraordinarily fertile slaves.[5] But despite special privileges bestowed during pregnancy and just after childbirth, some other slave women refused to breed children into bondage to add to the slavemaster's wealth.

Male slaves were deeply affected also. Henry Bibb, who escaped to the North and published an autobiography, understood all too well that a slave father did not fulfill the traditional paternal roles of provider and protector. He deeply regretted that he had fathered one slave child. "She was the first and shall be the last slave that ever I will father for chains and slavery on this earth."[6]

While it is impossible to know the degree to which contraceptive techniques were employed by bondsmen in the ante bellum period, it is known that birth prevention was practiced in tribal Africa.[7] In addition, contraceptives and abortifacients form a fascinating part of black American folklore.[8]

Black sexual autonomy was also tampered with in other ways. In the colonial period castration was not an uncommon form of punishment for recalcitrant blacks, and the practice was sanctioned by specific statutes. South Carolina law (1722) made castration mandatory for male slaves who had run away for the fourth time. Emasculation was also used to punish a broad range of sexual offenses because whites of that time feared sexual aggression by blacks. It is significant that in all the colonies—save Pennsylvania —castration as a lawful punishment was reserved for Negroes and Indians.[9]

Tenuous as the links between slave breeding and birth control may be, and farfetched as the comparison between 18th century punitive castration and family planning may seem to white eyes, the sexual exploitation of Americans of African descent may appear to black "militants" as a seamless web, an unbroken tradition.

Other elements in the tradition lend weight to the supposition. Lynch mobs

in the South sometimes castrated male victims before killing them during the era after the Civil War.

Just after the turn of the 20th century, male convicts were sterilized in State prisons in Indiana, West Virginia, and elsewhere under a belief that such surgery would suppress the sex drive and transform unruly prisoners into docile ones. Both whites and blacks were submitted to such procedures. By the end of World War I, the practice had been largely discontinued, but not entirely, and the proponents of sterilization occasionally supported their ideas in print.

Sterilizations involving both sexes were performed during the 1930's and 1940's at the State Hospital for Negroes located in Goldsboro, N.C.[10] The percentage of males sterilized, however, was higher there than in comparable white institutions in the same State. Again, blacks who were rapists or troublesome to hospital authorities were castrated to tranquilize them and make them more manageable. Although consent was not sought from the patients in advance of the operations, it was alleged they raised no objections. Relatives were asked for permission; but safeguards appear to have been inadequate.

Precisely how many hapless black men and women in the United States were the victims of coercive sterilization in those years may never be known.

Early Moral, Economic, and Political Debates on Birth Control

Black Americans began to discuss the merits of birth control just a few years after Margaret Sanger founded her first clinic in the Brooklyn section of New York City in 1916.

One of the earliest to approve, in print, of family planning, was W. E. B. DuBois, the scholar and civil rights activist. In 1922 in *The Crisis*, which he edited for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he gave a ringing endorsement to birth control, calling it "science and sense applied to the bringing of children into the world." Of all who required it, Dr. DuBois added, "we Negroes are first." He also wrote that having endless children resulted in a criminally high infant mortality rate and was inimical to the health of women. A second alternative, postponing marriage until middle age left unwanted children be brought into the world, DuBois also rejected. He felt that family planning was clearly preferable.[11] His early advocacy, however, had little effect; 10 years later DuBois lamented the fact that grassroots black opinion was totally ignorant of birth control.[12]

Not all educated blacks, however, agreed with DuBois. Many regarded family planning and birth control as immoral because of religious considerations and were little concerned about demographic factors.

For example, in 1934 the seventh annual convention of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) met in Kingston, Jamaica. The Garveyites, who were ardent black nationalists, unanimously passed a resolution condemning birth control. Curiously, it read much like a papal encyclical. Moved by an American black and seconded by a West Indian delegate, the resolution averred that "any attempt to interfere with the natural function of life is a rebellion against the conceived purpose of divinity in making man a part of His spiritual self."[13]

The convention further counseled persons of African descent throughout the world not to "accept or practice the theory of birth control such as is being advocated by irresponsible speculators who are attempting to interfere with the course of nature and

with the purpose of the God in whom we believe."[14]

Meanwhile, the Great Depression, which caused incalculable suffering among less privileged black Americans, brought home to some of the educated the desirability of a wider spread of family planning knowledge. They began to write about fertility control as a necessary and desirable part of good health care, as in the June 1932 issue of the *Birth Control Review*, published by the Birth Control Federation of America. Contributors and persons quoted particularly stressed the deficiency of family planning services available to blacks in spite of their receptivity to birth control techniques, family planning, and pregnancy spacing.

For example, Elmer Carter, editor of *Opportunity*, published by the National Urban League, pointed out that thousands of black women were seeking out unqualified abortionists to terminate pregnancies unwanted because of economic pressures. The real question, then, was whether birth control would be achieved by safe contraceptive means or by "the clumsy almost murderous methods of the medical racketeer."[15] He called to the reader's attention that two major black communities in the United States, Chicago's South Side and New York's Harlem, were each served by only one birth control clinic and that it would be most unfortunate if the birth control movement remained "unmindful or indifferent to the plight of the Negro."[16]

When birth control clinics finally were established in the 1930's in cities with large black populations, such as Baltimore, Detroit, and Cincinnati, Americans of African descent attended out of proportion to their shares of the populations. Several explanations were possible, but at least one demographer thought it likely that the situation reflected a "deliberate limitation of families among married couples who can ill afford more children in the city" and cited the low birth rates found in certain studies in Harlem.[17]

Pregnancy-spacing facilities were also made available to blacks in Berkley, a rural county in South Carolina with a tenant farmer population. No less than 80 percent of the contacted black persons with low incomes and little schooling utilized the methods of planning their families put at their disposal.[18]

Because of demonstrated acceptance and to meet the family planning needs of black Americans, the Birth Control Federation of America formed a Division of Negro Service. Members of its national advisory council on Negro problems included: Mary McLeod Bethune, head of the National Council of Negro Women; Walter White, executive director of the NAACP; the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Chuch in Harlem; and other nationally prominent blacks.

Nevertheless, family planning remained a delicate topic, and even some middle class black institutions were chary about giving their unqualified support to the movement. An exchange in the columns of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, one of the most influential of Afro-American weekly newspapers in the 1940's, illustrates the climate.

In March of 1947, the *Courier* printed an article entitled "Planned Parenthood Has the Answers to Questions Concerning Health and Happiness of the Family."[19] A few weeks later, in a letter to the editor, a Roman Catholic priest, who had worked among black people, criticized the paper for advocating a practice that was not only a violation of God's law but one that would decimate the black race.[20] The *Courier's* defense was that the article in question was actually a news release from a planned parenthood

agency and that the *Courier* did not necessarily endorse the philosophy of family planning. [21]

The Influence of Minority Status

The argument was not new in the 1940's that birth control was a vehicle by which Afro-Americans, as a minority group, could be decimated or by which they could decimate themselves. Marcus Garvey—regarded by many black separatists today as the progenitor of black power movements—brought up the possibility of racial extinction as early as 1923 in a book called *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. In it, he advocated that the black race strengthen itself in order to eliminate the chance they could be exterminated as he contended the American Indian had been. He cautioned blacks against supinely sitting by and permitting "the great white race to lift itself in numbers and power" so that in another five centuries this "full grown race of white men will in turn exterminate the weaker race of black men for the purpose of finding enough room on this limited mundane sphere to accommodate that race which will have numerically multiplied itself into many billions." [22]

Actually, Garvey was saying that global solidarity was imperative for blacks; he did not tell them to multiply pellmell or forsake contraception.

The idea of the desirability of continued growth of the Afro-American population was not confined to black nationalists of the Garvey stripe. For example, in 1939 black anthropologist W. Montague Cobb expected life in the United States to become increasingly competitive because the American population would be growing within fixed territorial limits. He speculated about the chances of the white majority liquidating the competing black minority. His prescription for the Afro-American was that "he should maintain his high birthrate observing the conditions of life necessary to this end. This alone has made him able to increase in spite of decimating mortality and hardships. If the tide should turn against him later, strength will be better than weakness in numbers." [23]

After World War II, the relation of the fertility of the black race and its salvation reemerged as a debatable matter. Arguments on both sides had changed little if at all.

Dr. Julian Lewis, a pathologist and a former professor at the University of Chicago, wrote in 1945 in the *Negro Digest* that the survival of the black race in the United States was dependent upon a high birth rate whereas the growth of the whites was guaranteed by a low death rate. [24] Lewis wanted to resolve the multiple problems of illiteracy, deficient medical facilities, and congested living conditions that curtailed black longevity instead of reducing the black population. He categorically denied that lowering the number of blacks would improve conditions in schools or hospitals.

Taking issue in the same year with those whom he labeled the "self-appointed guardians of the Negro race," black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier maintained that "more and more babies born indiscriminately without thought of the parent's health or ability to rear them, is not the answer." Black survival and progress, he maintained, were not contingent upon the number of babies born but on the number who lived to become strong, healthy adults. Frazier — though a vociferous champion of planned parenthood for many years—did not view it as a cure-all for the assorted ills of black people. He did, however, insist that for the American black "to live decently and efficiently, whether his relative numbers are greater or smaller, will de-

pend upon knowledge and the intelligent ordering of his life rather than upon ignorance and uncontrolled impulse."[25]

Almost a decade later Lewis was still apprehensive about blacks becoming an "inconspicuous group" rather than the country's largest minority. His reasoning remained the same, and he faulted the Planned Parenthood Federation for trying to "improve the quality of the human race at the cost of numbers." If blacks practiced birth control on a general scale, it would mean "race suicide," Lewis said.[26]

"Race suicide" was the fashionable phrase in the early 1950's, but it began to be supplanted by "genocide" after the publication in 1951 of William Patterson's book *We Charge Genocide—The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government Against the Negro People.* This publication, it should be noted, did not treat the subject of birth control. Patterson concerned himself with documenting sundry forms of "genocide" including acts of terrorism, harassment by police, deplorable ghetto living conditions, disfranchisement, job discrimination, and inaccessible medical therapy. In the first edition of the book, the question of birth control was not raised. But, 19 years later, when a second edition was published, Patterson stated that "Measures to prevent birth within the group [American Negroes] are practiced in several states."[27]

Fear of "genocide" is, of course, not peculiar to blacks and has been voiced by various national, ethnic, racial, and religious minorities. Especially where minorities have suffered oppression or conflict, they may associate safety and security with strength of numbers. For example, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, wrote that any fertile Jewish woman who did not bear at least four healthy children was derelict in her duty to the Jewish nation. Further, he equated her dereliction with that of a man who evaded military service.[28]

In the United States (where Jews are, by and large, very enthusiastic practitioners of contraception, and there is no talk of gentiles liquidating Jews by foisting birth control on them) certain Spanish-speaking groups have, from time to time, expressed fears of birth control as a genocidal plan. The Young Lords, the Puerto Rican counterpart of the Black Panthers, are concerned about the dilution of Puerto Rican strength on the mainland through government-sponsored population programs. Some nationalistic Puerto Ricans on the Caribbean island have taken the position that great numbers will expedite the achievement of independence from the United States. And a government plot to attenuate the power of *la raza* (the people) has been perceived by some Chicanos who recall that past experimental contraceptive research has utilized Puerto Rican and Mexican-American subjects.[29]

Present Spectrum of Black Opinion

In the 1960's and 1970's, eminent blacks usually considered moderates and antiseparatists have mostly supported birth control. Perhaps the best known advocate was Martin Luther King, Jr., who was the recipient of the Margaret Sanger Award in Human Rights in 1966. Dr. King, in accepting the award, said, "Negroes have no mere academic nor ordinary interest in family planning. They have a special and urgent concern. . . . The Negro constitutes half the poor of the nation. Like all poor, Negro and white, they have many unwanted children. This is

a cruel evil they urgently need to control. There is scarcely anything more tragic in human life than a child who is not wanted."[30]

Other prominent black proponents of family planning have been Bayard Rustin, chief organizer of the 1963 march on Washington, A. Philip Randolph, the trade unionist, and James Farmer, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) when that organization was still integrationist in orientation and makeup. Dr. Jerome H. Holland, a sociologist and educator and a former U.S. Ambassador to Sweden, served for a time as the chairman of Planned Parenthood-World Population. The members of the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus have co-sponsored family planning legislation in the House of Representatives.

But while the "establishment" has accepted fertility control, three and a half centuries of persecution have left a legacy of mistrust that affects the thinking of many blacks, and family planning is rarely seen in isolation from the black American dilemma, past and present. Considerable skepticism about the aims of birth control programs, especially those in ghetto neighborhoods, remains. This is especially true when other needs of the black poor are ignored. A recent sampling of black opinion is summarized in Table 1 on the following page.

The Establishment

The NAACP, oldest and largest of civil rights organizations in the United States, adopted a policy statement at its fifty-seventh convention in 1966 that said, in part, "Mindful of problems of family health and economic stability, we support the dissemination of information and materials concerning family health and family planning to all who desire it."[31]

Four years later an editorial in *The Crisis,* published by the NAACP, talked of the population explosion as a phenomenon requiring greater attention to family planning because "the future of the entire human race is at stake." It noted the division within the black community over the issue of birth control, and it criticized those blacks who seemed to espouse the "Hitler doctrine of babies and more babies, regardless of the circumstances into which they were born or of the prospect of their attaining the good life." On the other hand, it pointed out that more babies were needed and that poor black people should not reject parenthood out of despair.[32]

While some rank and file members of the NAACP and some local branch activists undoubtedly have reservations about birth control for blacks, the national leadership of the NAACP "believes in family planning as a social value and rejects the notion . . . that this is a form of genocide."[33]

The National Urban League, which is also biracial and pro-integration, has endorsed family planning for more than 30 years. However, in the early 1960's, its Board of Trustees became particularly concerned with the problems of black families receiving welfare and with strengthening black family life and reducing individual and family dependency by "positive and realistic programs of family planning." At that time, many welfare departments still refused to involve themselves in family planning even as referral agencies. The Urban League charged that this practice undercut the effectiveness of programs to make welfare recipients self-supporting, and that "to prohibit case workers in public welfare agencies from discussing family planning resources with their clients is a discrimination which denies to welfare recipients one of the principal means of family health and progress utilized by more affluent couples."[34]

Whitney Young, the late executive director of the Urban League, once wrote that the responsibility of tax-supported welfare and medical agencies to impart information about birth control was as basic as their obligation to share information about the availability of polio inoculation or X-rays.

Not all responsible "moderate" blacks, however, share the NAACP's and the Urban League's opinions.

Author and journalist Langston Hughes wrote a column in which his

Table 1. Percent of Blacks Agreeing with Statements Related to the Genocide Issue by Region, Sex, and Age, 1972

Statement	North				South			
	Men under 28 years (328)*	Men 28 years and over (307)	Women under 28 years (445)	Women 28 years and over (386)	Men under 28 years (82)	Men 28 years and over (71)	Women under 28 years (71)	Women 28 years and over (112)
Birth control clinics in black neighborhoods should be operated by blacks ...	67	59	56	57	68	54	45	52
As the need for cheap labor goes down, there will be an effort to reduce the number of blacks	57	45	61	53	43	48	41	38
As blacks become more militant, there will be an effort to decrease the black population	67	59	67	62	61	56	55	57
The survival of black people depends on increasing the number of black births	62	54	51	51	45	55	48	54
Birth control programs are a plot to eliminate blacks	56	36	42	40	23	34	20	22

* Number of people polled.

Source: Turner, Castellano and Darity, William A., "Fears of Genocide Among Black Americans as Related to Age, Sex, and Region," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 63, No. 12 (December 1973) p. 1930.

famous character Simple said: "White folks are not thinking about being sterilized, neither in war nor peace. It is India, China, Africa, and Harlem they is considering—300 million dollars worth of birth control for us! You know I really do believe white folks has always got something up their sleeve for colored folks. Yes, they has."[35]

Julian Bond, the Georgia legislator, in addressing a Syracuse University commencement audience in 1970, suggested that the intense interest in the population explosion could lead to genocide of Afro-Americans and other poor people. He inferred that ". . . without the proper perspective the *Population Bomb* becomes a theoretical hammer in the hands of the angry, frightened and powerful racists, as well as over the heads of black people, as the justification for genocide."[36]

The *Population Bomb* to which Julian Bond alluded is the title of a controversial book by a population biologist at Stanford University, Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich. A frightening exposition of the population problem and its attendant dangers to mankind, the book is also an eloquent plea for stabilizing the world's population, for lowering the growth rate to zero, and even for "making it go negative." Ehrlich himself is the honorary president and past president of Zero Population Growth (ZPG), a national organization originally founded in California. The purpose of ZPG is to educate the public in general and legislators in particular about the issue of overpopulation, to press for enactment of far-reaching birth control programs, and to promote research into population problems and more effective contraception.

Most advocates of lowering the growth rate to zero talk about arresting population growth by means of tax incentives not to reproduce beyond a certain limit, legalized abortion, and population education as an integral part of school curricula. A minority profess a belief in the necessity of compulsory birth control by such measures as adding sterilants to water supplies. Not surprisingly, it is the extreme beliefs that receive the greatest publicity and give the concept of zero population growth an unfavorable image with many blacks.

Dr. William Darity, chairman of the Public Health Department at the University of Massachusetts, has bluntly called the idea of zero population growth "genocide for our black people." At a Yale University debate in January 1972, he said that emphasis on planned parenthood to achieve zero population growth is designed to reduce and control black population.[37]

By and large, black spokesmen have been dubious about the ecological apprehensions of those who fear a "population explosion" and have instead worried that national attention and, more importantly, public money desperately needed in the ghettos could be diverted to environmental causes. For example, at the First National Congress on Optimum Population and Environment in 1970, the discontented Black Caucus submitted that "the elimination of dangerous species such as rats, roaches and other vermin is of more immediate concern to black people than the preservation of brook trout, buffalo and bald eagles."

Although the Caucus did not reject birth control as such, it did point out that fewer births were no remedy for the health problems of the living. The Caucus also wanted an assurance that "no coercive family planning or population stabilization measures are allowed to become part of a national or local legislative policy."[38]

Women's Groups

Many black women are claiming the right to exercise freedom of choice in the matter of their own fertility.

Some are self-styled revolutionaries

and nationalists such as Dara Abubakari (Virginia E. Y. Collins), a vice president of the separatist Republic of New Africa, who says, "Women must be free to choose what they want. They should be free to decide if and when they want children. Maybe in this phase of the game we feel that we don't need any children because we have to fight the liberation struggle. So we won't have any children. We have the right to say so. Men shouldn't tell us."[39]

A manifesto written by a black women's liberation group in Mount Vernon, N.Y., and signed by two welfare recipients, two housewives, a domestic, and others indicts black men for making black women the "real niggers in this society oppressed by whites, male and female, and the black man too." The manifesto also states that "Black women are being asked by militant black brothers not to practice birth control because it's a form of Whitey's committing genocide on black people. Well, true enough, but it takes two to practice genocide and black women are able to decide for themselves, like poor people all over the world whether they will submit to genocide. For us birth control is the freedom to fight genocide of black women and children. . . . Having too many babies stops us from supporting our children, teaching them the truth . . . and from fighting black men who still want to use and exploit us."[40]

Carolyn Jones, a black author, has written that black men who have preached against abortion have often been nowhere to be found when child support became necessary. Miss Jones has also stated that "young black women who watched their own mothers and grandmothers struggle to raise a family alone are no longer willing to listen to the black man's cry of genocide."[41]

Some black spokeswomen such as Shirley Chisholm, U.S. Congresswoman from Brooklyn, have unequivocally disavowed the genocide interpretation of birth control. She has characterized genocide statements as "male rhetoric for male ears. It falls flat to female listeners, and to thoughtful male ones." In her book *Unbought and Unbossed*, she has argued that two or three wanted youngsters who will be loved and educated can contribute more to racial progress than any number of children who are ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and neglected. To Mrs. Chisholm, racial pride and simple humanity buttress this attitude.[42]

Mrs. Chisholm has been a consistent supporter of family planning. She was honored in the summer of 1969 by United Planned Parenthood for her work, and in December of the same year she testified before Congress on behalf of a bill to expand, improve, and better coordinate the family planning services and population activities of the Federal Government. She explained that in her own "Bedford-Stuyvesant community, black women are glad to get direction in the area of family planning. I know that thousands of black women have been maimed by botched abortions because they couldn't get the family planning help that white women get."[43]

On occasion, black women have clashed with black men. The story of a mobile planned parenthood clinic in the Homewood-Brushton area of Pittsburgh, Pa., is an illustration.

Dr. Charles Greenlee, a Pittsburgh physician, accused the clinic of operating "without moral responsibility to the black race" and of trying to keep birth rates among blacks as low as possible by "pill-pushing" by inquisitive, untrained white workers in black neighborhoods. He labeled the clinic an instrument of genocide, and his views were reported in the *New York Times*.[44]

Subsequently, Dr. Greenlee told the press he was not opposed to planned

parenthood as such but that he objected to family planning programs sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) that concentrated on black neighborhoods. He charged that workers approached only black women in poverty areas and that the motive was "to make less niggers so they won't have to build houses for them."[45]

Greenlee then combined his efforts with those of William Bouie Haden, who led a black organization called the United Movement for Progress, and the mobile clinic was closed despite the public protests of 70 black women. Haden warned that firebombings and rioting would result "if anyone tries to operate a birth control project in the area."[46] In February of 1969, five other poverty neighborhoods were denied funds for planned parenthood facilities due to Haden's activities.

Black women spearheaded the counterattack. The members of the local branch of the Welfare Rights Organization, all recipients of public assistance, clarified their support for planned parenthood in a press release on February 24, 1969. They did not want to be told how many children to have. "We think a mother can better care for her family if she can control the number of children she bears, and we think that a mother deserves the opportunity to decide when her health and well-being is better served by preventing conception." Free choice was the crux of the dispute. The Welfare Rights Organization also observed that "most of the anti-birth control pressure is coming from men!—Men who do not have to bear the children. We're speaking for the women and we want the Planned Parenthood Centers to stay in our neighborhoods."

As a consequence of agitation by a few hundred poor black women, the Federal funds originally earmarked for birth control were restored in March. Haden had been snubbed by the very people he had claimed to represent, and little has been heard from Haden or Greenlee since.

Radicals, Nationalists, and Special Interest Groups

Acceptance by the black "Establishment" of family planning has only increased the skepticism of the "anti-Establishment" groups; and the more available contraceptive services have become in black, low-income areas, the greater the suspicion that birth control for blacks may be an attempt to lower black numbers—especially when other needs of the black poor are ignored.

Dick Gregory, the black social critic and humorist, made the suspicion clear in his well-known cover story in *Ebony* called "My Answer to Genocide." Quite simply, Gregory's answer was "eight black kids—and another baby on the way." Although Gregory, a vegetarian, held that birth control is contrary to nature and that therefore he could never use it, his chief point was that he mistrusted any white-devised policy for blacks. "For years they told us where to sit, where to eat, and where to live. Now they want to dictate our bedroom habits. First the white man tells me to sit in the back of the bus. Now it looks like he wants me to sleep under the bed. Back in the days of slavery, black folks couldn't grow kids fast enough for white folks to harvest. Now that we've got a little taste of power, white folks want us to call a moratorium on having children."[47]

Gregory, in the view of most supporters of planned parenthood, first blurred the distinction between the concept of family planning and the ideal of the small family and then grossly distorted the latter by suggesting that it meant no childbearing at all. But perhaps even more important, Gregory seems to have said that nothing of value to blacks could come from

the white power structure. In this, he is not alone, and such feelings of alienation may be a mainspring of opposition to family planning for blacks (see the later section **The Politics of Opposition**).

Other sources of caustic criticism of family planning for blacks are various nationalist and radical organizations, though not all subscribe to the genocide philosophy. One of the most outspoken in its rejection of birth control programs is the Black Panther Party (actually a Marxist black revolutionary group). It has proposed several reasons in its Party publications.

In 1970 when New York State liberalized its abortion law, Panther member Brenda Hyson wrote in the party paper, *The Black Panther*, that the new statute was a victory for the "oppressive ruling class who will use this law to kill off Blacks and other oppressed people before they are born."[48] It was just a matter of time, she wrote, before voluntary abortion led to involuntary abortion and compulsory sterilization.

The Black Panther has also contended that planned parenthood, black participation in the Vietnam War, venereal disease, prostitution, coercive sterilization, and restrictive welfare legislation are all connected and are part of a U.S. Government plan of genocide against black people aided by inhuman living conditions, police murders, rat bites, and frequent fires and accidents due to dilapidated housing.[49]

In *Black News*, a youth-oriented black nationalist, biweekly published in Brooklyn, N.Y., Brother Kahlil charged whites with perpetrating "deceptive genocide" by means of birth control. The "beast with an evil intellect" wanted to create a "blond-haired, blue-eyed world." To that end, he said, black women were duped into having unnecessary hysterectomies and surgical sterilizations. The use of fertility control pills and other contraceptives by women was also vigorously rejected. Fertility control by men was equally bad. Of the condom, he said, ". . . the hidden meaning of the Trojan was to emasculate the black man by convincing him that he should throw away his living sperm in the white man's rubber contraption rather than to put it into his woman's fertile womb."[50]

No black nationalist organization, however, has been more vitriolic in its condemnation of population control and family planning than the Nation of Islam, or the Black Muslims as they are popularly known. The fear of birth control as a "death plan" was starkly expressed by the late Elijah Muhammad, the long-time leader of the Chicago-based movement. In his book, *Message to the Black Man in America*, he admonished fellow blacks to beware of the "tricks the devils [whites] are using to instill the idea of a false birth control in their clinics and hospitals" and to avoid "being trapped into the kind of disgraceful birth control laws now aimed exclusively at poor, helpless black peoples who have no one to rely on." Elijah Muhammad further argued that both the Bible and the Holy Koran taught against contraception and that the white man's motive in supporting planned parenthood was not the well-being of Negroes but their extermination.[51]

Birth control, it should be remembered, plays a crucial role in Black Muslim racial beliefs. The Black Muslims say that the original race was black and that the white race came about when a renegade black scientist, Yacub, made use of a rigid birth control law to kill off all the black babies on the island of Pelan. After 600 years, Malcolm X once asserted, "all they had left was a pale-skinned, blue-eyed, blond-haired thing you call a man. But actually the Bible calls him the devil."[52]

To support the basic Muslim position, *Muhammad Speaks*, the widely read Black Muslim weekly, has pub-

lished numerous articles decrying the "deadly nature and diabolic intention behind birth control schemes." For example, a 1969 article told its readers that "in this country, they are birth control targets far out of proportion to their percentage of the population—just like the Black soldiers in Vietnam are drafted, wounded and killed far out of their proportion of the population."[53]

Abortion reform has also drawn the wrath of *Muhammad Speaks*. In 1971 it reported on a pro-abortion women's march in Washington, D.C., during which one black feminist averred that "Black women are uniting to control their own bodies. We will not be prone for you men any longer. We want the right to have abortions."[54] Other black females echoed her sentiments, but *Muhammad Speaks* emphasized the infinitesimal black showing at the march by entitling the story "Black women reject abortion as cure-all."

Some Black Muslims, however, have been less adamant against family planning. Malcolm X, for example, who was for several years a respected Black Muslim leader but later broke with the hierarchy, had more complex views. In a 1962 interview, Malcolm said the phrase "birth control" was distasteful to him and that he thought "people, particularly Negroes, would be more willing to plan than to be controlled."[55] Malcolm also implied that Black Muslim dogma did not proscribe family planning by means of techniques requiring discipline, such as the rhythm method or *coitus interruptus*.

Identifying Some Family Size Issues

Behind the rhetoric of many opponents of family planning for blacks are three issues of concern to all Afro-Americans. These affect fertility control attitudes and appear and reappear in various guises. They are: Who should control black fertility? How can the basic freedoms of the black minority best be achieved and maintained? What are the best political and cultural strategies for blacks?

Coercion: The Basic Concern

Coercion is not an academic matter. Across the country public officials, reflecting the wave of widespread indignation over escalating welfare costs, have put forward punitive proposals, and these measures have often been seriously debated in State legislatures. Typically, they could entail imprisonment or compulsory use of birth control (if such is possible) or mandatory sterilization after a woman on welfare has given birth to a certain number of illegitimate children. Continued eligibility for welfare payments would depend on compliance.

Punitive sterilization bills have been proposed in the Mississippi legislature since 1958—ostensibly to solve the problem of illegitimacy. A 1964 measure in Mississippi was denounced by Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation, and by the Association for Voluntary Sterilization. (The Planned Parenthood Federation has steadfastly defended voluntarism in family planning. It has filed *amici curiae* briefs to fight anything that smacks of compulsory birth control. It has argued that compelling women to practice birth control is an infringement of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and violates the right of privacy.) Quick to recognize the racist overtones of the 1964 bill, SNCC issued a pamphlet entitled *Genocide in Mississippi*. SNCC quoted one advocate of sterilization who prophesied during the legislative debate: "When the cutting starts, they'll (Negroes) head for Chicago." In 1971

there was a spate of similarly coercive bills proposed in state legislatures.

As might be expected, blacks have strenuously opposed such legislation. A black doctor from Chicago commented about an Illinois measure that the "connection . . . to Nazism is so close it scares me."[56] (Sterilization of Jews by the Nazi regime has been well documented.) The black author, Julius Lester, characterized forced sterilization of welfare mothers as a genocidal weapon against the black community.[57] Jesse Jackson, a well-known black politician and activist, called it "an inhuman social proposition based upon race rather than population."[58]

Although punitive birth control legislation has not been enacted to date, rumors are often circulated about black women who have been sterilized without any medical necessity for the procedure. They are widely believed by blacks. While most allegations of this nature are never substantiated, an indeterminate number have certainly been performed either for financial or racist reasons or for both. Dr. Herbert Avery of the Watts Extended Health and Family Planning Group claims to have examined numerous black Southern women who had been sterilized without their consent "because they were having too many children."[59]

One incident in 1973 in Alabama of charged unwarranted sterilization was brought before a Federal court as a violation of laws that all Federally sponsored family planning services be strictly voluntary. Two black sisters, one 12 years of age and the other 14, were sterilized at a Montgomery family planning clinic funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity. The clinic maintained that Mrs. Lonnie Relf, the mother of the girls, though illiterate, understood the nature of the surgical procedures to be performed on her daughters. Mrs. Relf claimed she thought it was vaccinations.

The case resulted in a Federal decision prohibiting the sterilization of minors and other legally incompetent persons, and Federal agencies providing family planning services were told to initiate stronger safeguards against sterilization abuses in the future. So far, however, such agencies have been unable to propose measures acceptable to the court.

The Politics of Numbers

For many black opponents of fertility limitation, the "strength in numbers" argument is the most persuasive. [illegible] nationalist Daniel H. Watts who publishes the monthly journal *Liberator* clearly stated the concept. "Our safety, our survival literally, depend on our ever increasing numbers and the heavy concentration of our people in the financial heart of America—namely in the large urban centers."[60] A black physician in Pittsburgh further spelled it out when he said, "Our birth rate is the only thing we have. If we keep on producing, they're going to have to either kill us or grant us the benefits of full citizenship."[61]

In other words, the "strength in numbers" proponents are still influenced by the old fears of being discriminated against and perhaps even being exterminated because of minority status. They feel that only by bloc voting and other concerted political action can blacks achieve first-class status in America and that obviously the more black people, the more political power and safety.

The demographic trends concerning blacks in the United States have added vitality to the numbers argument. The proportion of Americans of African descent in the U.S. population declined steadily from 19 percent in 1790 to 9.7 percent in 1930 although their numbers rose from about 758,000 to around 11,900,000 over the same period. The drop in proportion was caused partly

by the termination of the forced immigration of blacks as slaves but chiefly by massive European immigration through the early 20th century. Since 1930, restricted European immigration to the United States simultaneously with a higher birth rate among blacks than whites has caused the proportion of Afro-Americans to rise somewhat. As of 1975, black population was estimated at about 25 million, or approximately 11.5 percent of the general population (see Fig. 1 opposite the title page).

(Some blacks, however, contend that Afro-Americans are undercounted. Every chance he gets, Dick Gregory states publicly that he disbelieves the census statistics published by the Government. James Forman (former executive secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), among others, claims that the black population is actually 30 million.)

Perhaps more meaningful than the total Afro-American population is its distribution. According to the Bureau of the Census, blacks now constitute a clear majority in six major cities (see Table 2), including Newark, N.J., Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, Ga. Eight additional large cities have a population that is 40 percent or more black. This concentration is attributable to

Table 2. The 10 U.S. Cities of 200,000 or More With the Highest Percentages of Blacks, by Rank, 1970

City	Total population	Percent black	Percent blacks in total voting-age population
Washington, D.C.	756,510	71	64
Newark, N.J.	382,377	54	48
Atlanta, Ga.	497,024	51	46
Baltimore, Md.	905,759	46	41
New Orleans, La.	593,471	45	39
Detroit, Mich.	1,511,336	44	39
Birmingham, Ala.	300,667	42	36
Richmond, Va.	249,621	42	37
St. Louis, Mo.	662,236	41	35
Memphis, Tenn.	623,755	39	34

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, 1971*, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 42 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 124, 133, 137; and *County and City Data Book, 1972* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973) pp. 629-797.

earlier black immigration to large cities in search of jobs and opportunities and a later white exodus when inner cities began to experience economic and administrative difficulties. At present, 50 percent of America's blacks are to be found in 50 cities, and one-third of the total black population is concentrated in just 15 cities.

Do these figures warrant Daniel Watts's conclusion that the "city has become the Black man's land?" By virtue of their size, black communities have managed to elect mayors in Gary, Ind., Cleveland, Ohio, Newark, N.J., Los Angeles, Calif., Atlanta, Ga., Detroit, Mich., and elsewhere. But whether the quality of life for black residents of those urban centers has improved even slightly is debatable. The crucial economic relationship between whites and blacks has not really been altered.

Census data in 1970 disclosed that there are 102 counties, all in the South, that are at least half black. Taken in conjunction with the voting rights that blacks increasingly exercise, these statistics point to a tremendous new political potential. Afro-Americans are already electing public officials of their race at a rate unparalleled since Reconstruction. If the one-man-one-vote concept is fully realized, blacks are bound to further augment their political strength.

But there are Afro-Americans who feel that the price may be exorbitant. Dr. Martin Luther King once stated that Negroes "do not wish for domination purchased at a cost of human misery. Negroes were once bred by slave owners to be sold as merchandise. They do not welcome any solution which involves population breeding as a weapon."[62]

The "strength in numbers" school has also been ridiculed on tactical as well as moral grounds—and not only by so-called "moderates." Julius Lester believes that black revolutionaries should urge their women to postpone having children so that they may fully participate in the battle. "There is power in numbers," he has conceded, "but that power is greatly diminished if a lot of those numbers have to sit at home and change diapers instead of being on the front lines, where most of them would rather be."[63]

The Politics of Opposition

In one sense, the very success of the birth control movement in American society may militate against its acceptance by blacks who feel almost total alienation from the dominant white culture.

The opinions of H. Rap Brown, successor to Stokeley Carmichael as head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), illustrate the problem. He views birth control programs designed for low-income groups as an attempt at genocide, and in *Die Nigger Die* Brown explained why. "If the white folks say it's more cultured to whisper, you talk loud. If white folks say gray suits are fashionable, you go buy a pink one." Brown wrote that even as a teenager he "knew white folks couldn't do wrong right, so whatever they thought was good, I knew it wasn't."[64]

This idea overlooks that even if a majority of whites foster black family planning for base motives, it may still be in the best interest of blacks to accept planned parenthood.

Present Black Family Size and Trends

So far this *Bulletin* has dealt primarily with public utterances and writings on fertility control by black American opinion makers. Now, a comparison of

practice to pronouncements may be interesting. As you will see in the following subsections, data on fertility suggests that large numbers of blacks approve of family planning and put it to use.

Opinion Polls

In a study published in 1970, Donald Bogue found that 80 percent of his Chicago sample of black women ghetto dwellers approved of birth control and 75 percent were actually using it. Bogue thought it "possible that the controversy over birth control for Negroes has eroded approval of family planning somewhat although it is still overwhelmingly positive."[65]

Another study published in 1972 revealed that a significant majority of blacks polled felt that the government should provide contraceptive information and supplies, should make abortions available to all women, and thought sterilization should be legal for people who desired it (see Table 3). But only a minority concurred with the idea that the government on a federal level should be trying to slow down population growth in the United States.

Fertility

As long as data have been available, blacks have had more children than whites. However, measuring fertility

Table 3. Percent of Positive Responses* to Questions About Government Aid to Birth Control Programs, by Race, 1971

Question	Blacks	Whites
Do you think that information about birth control should or should not be made available by the government to all men and women who want it?	77	88
Do you think that the government should make birth control supplies available to all men and women who want them? (Asked only of those with positive response to question above.)	83	73
Do you think the government should or should not help make abortion available to all women who want it?	67	66
Do you think that sterilization operations ought to be legal for a person who wants them?	66	81
Do you think the government should or should not try to do anything to slow down population growth in the United States?	42	57

* National probability sample of 1,708 persons, 16 years or older, including a double sampling of blacks.

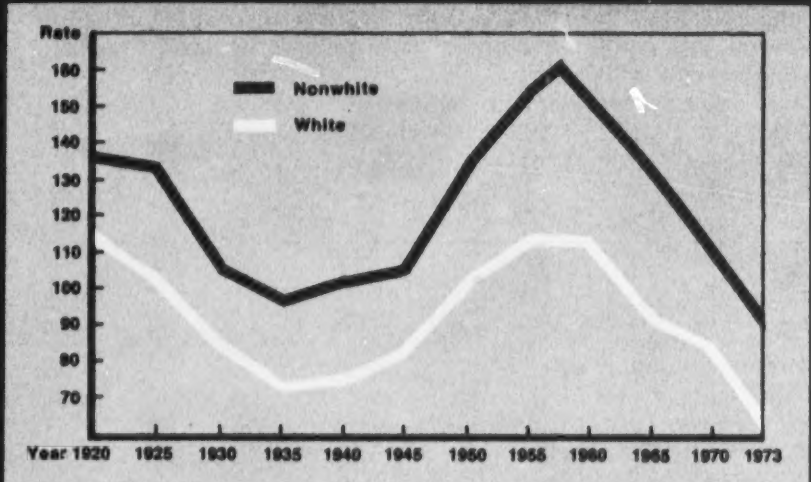
Source: Lipson, Gerald, and Wolman, Dianne, "Polling Americans on Birth Control and Population," *Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1972) pp. 39-42.

and determining which factors contribute to fertility differentials are complex exercises.

There are two kinds of fertility measures: period and cohort. Period rates are most frequently used. These measure fertility within a specified time frame—usually 1 year. The general fertility rate, which indicates how many live births occur per 1,000 women in a given year, is a period measure. Other examples include the crude birth rate and the total fertility rate. Being limited in time, period measures tell us nothing about family size or timing of births. Furthermore, period measures are affected by the age structure of the population. They nevertheless are good indicators of the extent of fertility in any given year.

"Cohort fertility rates differ from period rates for they analyze the fertility histories of women born in a given year rather than describe year to year changes in childbearing."[66] Cohort measurements are not limited by time; rather, they trace the fertility of women through their reproductive years. The best-known cohort measure is "completed family size," or the total number of children a women has had in her lifetime. Cohort measures give

Figure 2. General Fertility Rates by Race, 1920 through 1973



Sources: U.S. Public Health Service, National Center for Health Statistics, *Vital Statistics of the United States, 1969, Volume 1 — Natality* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974) p. 1–6.

U.S. Public Health Service, National Center for Health Statistics, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, Summary Report, Final Natality Statistics, 1973 (Health Resources Administration, January 30, 1975) p. 6.

no indication of current fertility; rather, they yield information on family size. To best understand the fertility behavior of any group, both period and cohort measures should be utilized.

The general fertility rate—the number of live births per 1,000 women 15 to 44—has always been higher for blacks than for whites, as figure 2 shows. It is interesting, however, that the changes in rates over time have been quite similar for both groups. Fertility for black and for white women fell during the depression years and climbed for over a decade after World War II. This "baby boom" lasted a little longer for blacks and did not level off until 1960. Since then, fertility has declined steadily. The latest available data for black women in 1973 indicate a record low rate of 94.3—less even than that in 1936 during the great depression and about the same as that of whites in 1965.

The general fertility rate—a period measure—tells nothing about family size. However, the 1970 Census asked women the following question: "How many babies have you ever had, not counting stillbirths?" For women in the 35-through-39-year cohort, this represents approximate completed family size. The data at present show that black women have had more children (3,450 per 1,000 women) than white women (2,920 per 1,000 women). In other words, black women of age 35 to 39 averaged almost three and a half children each, while white women of the same age averaged just under three. However, data shows there were marked differences in the fertility of rural and urban blacks. This brings up the second problem alluded to earlier —determining which factors contribute to fertility differentials.

Race is not **the** casual factor which explains fertility differentials. As we have seen, blacks generally have larger families than whites. But, independent of race, rural dwellers have larger families than city residents and the less educated and the poor have larger families than the more educated and the rich. As blacks are more likely than whites to be less educated and poor, it is clear that race cannot be easily identified as **the** causal explanation of fertility differentials.

Rural blacks, for example, have had about five-and-a-half children, on the average. These people live predominantly in the South and many accept the long-standing norms that encourage large families. A 1960 national survey concluded that "by the time non-white couples are one generation or more removed from the rural South, their fertility is very much like that of the white population."[67] A more recent study suggests that ". . . other factors in addition to those associated with rural background, must be sufficiently altered before the white-black differential in fertility ceases to exist."[68]

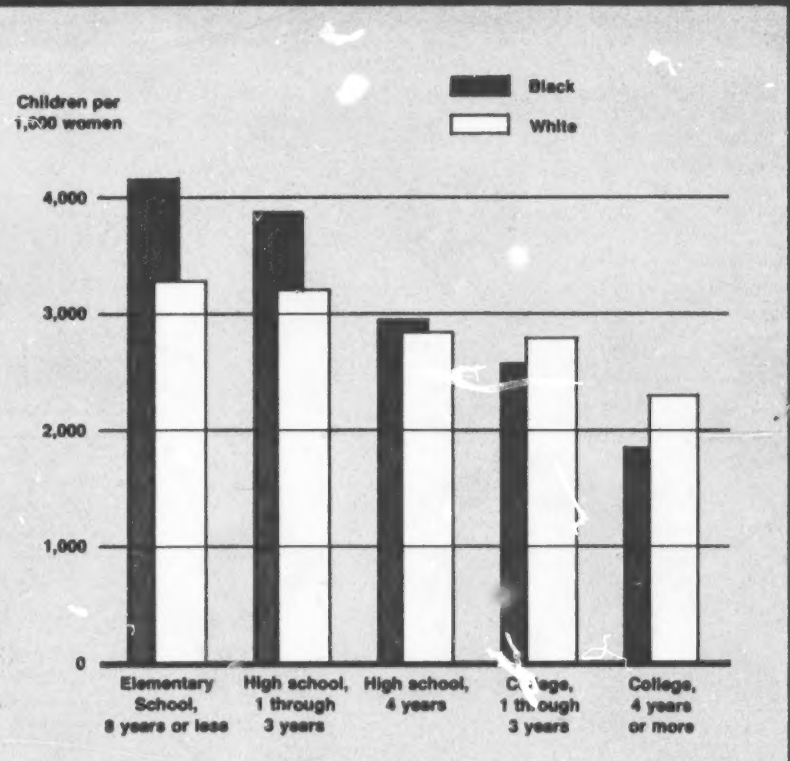
Perhaps the most striking "other factor" is educational attainment. As figure 3 shows on the next page, whether for black women or for whites, fertility declines with increased education. The effect of more schooling is especially striking for black women. Those with less than a high school diploma had about four children on the average. Those who graduated from high school averaged less than three children—about the same as their white counterparts. College-educated black women averaged less than two children—below replacement and well below that of college-educated white women. In fact, black women with an advanced education had the lowest completed family size of any subgroup in the United States. Fertility data analyzed in terms of family income and occupation yield similar results.

The fertility patterns for the 35-to-39 cohort referred to above reflect past behavior rather than present or future fertility. The Bureau of the Census, in

its annual sample surveys, includes a question about expected fertility addressed to all wives living with their husbands. The women are first asked how many children they have at present and then "Do you expect to have any additional children?"

The answers in 1971 and 1974 of black and white women are illustrated in figure 4. Generally, fertility expectations have been declining for all subgroups. Older black women expect to have more children than white women. However, among those under age 25,

Figure 3. Number of Children Ever Born per 1,000 Women 35 to 39 Years of Age, by Race and Education, 1970



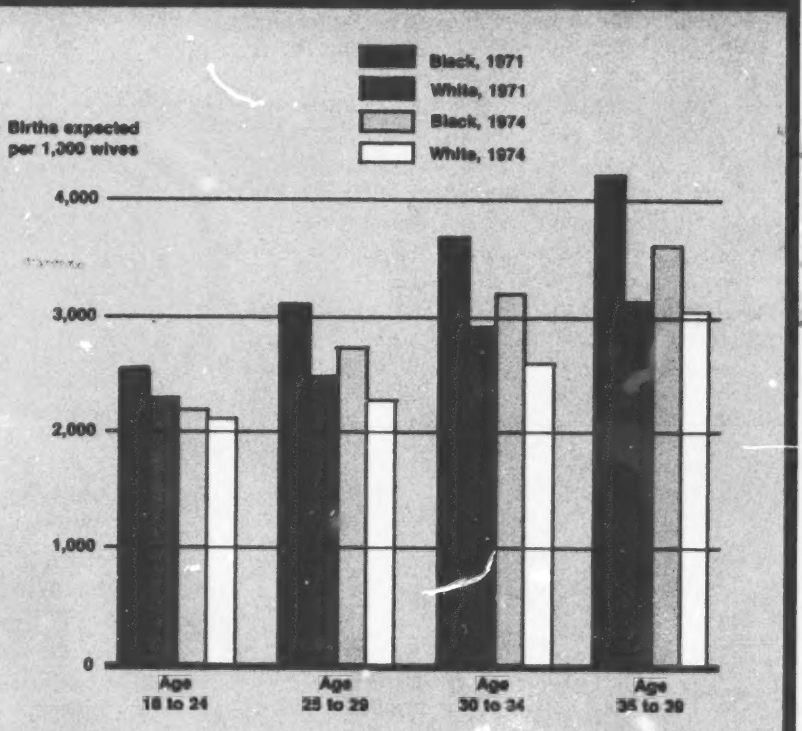
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports*, Final Report PC(2)–3A, "Women by Number of Children Ever Born," (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973) pp. 185, 189.

there is no longer any significant difference in family size expectations. By 1974, both blacks and whites wanted about 2.2 children on the average. As recently as 1971, the difference among younger women was still fairly large. This very recent evidence of convergence marks a striking change by black women towards family size.

Family Planning Practices

Having exactly the number of children expected depends to a great extent on

Figure 1. Total Births Expected per 1,000 Wives, by Race and Age Group: 1971 and 1974



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 277, "Fertility Expectations of American Women: June 1974," (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975) p. 15.

the use of effective contraceptives. Both the 1965 and 1970 National Fertility surveys came to the same conclusion: "Many couples will have children before they want them and a significant fraction will ultimately exceed the number they want."[69] The 1970 survey found that 13 percent of the white and 27 percent of the black births in the 5-year period ending in 1970 were unwanted and no less than 42 percent of the white and 61 percent of the black births were unplanned.[70] These figures indicate either large-scale nonuse of contraceptives or the inefficiency of those being used.

As recently as the 1930's, probably no more than 10 percent of American black families practiced birth control. The first study with such information on blacks was the 1960 Growth of American Families (GAF) survey. About 60 percent of nonwhite women interviewed said they had practiced birth control at some time in their married lives; but 81 percent of white women had done so. Moreover, nonwhite women tended to postpone the use of contraceptives until after having had a number of children. They also relied on less efficient methods such as douching, jelly, and suppositories; and some depended on methods originating with the male. As a result nonwhites were less successful than whites in planning their families.

The National Fertility Survey in 1965 found that 77 percent of black women had practiced birth control at some time in their married lives. The percentage who had used or expected to use contraception in the future went up from 76 percent in 1960 to 86 percent. Farley commented that "It appears that during the first half of the 1960's, birth control became much more commonly employed by the lower socioeconomic and rural groups of black women who reported very low rates of contraceptive use in 1960."[71] By the time of the 1970 national survey, about 60 percent of the black women under 45 were practicing birth control at the time of interviews compared to 66 percent of the white women—a significant increase over 1965.

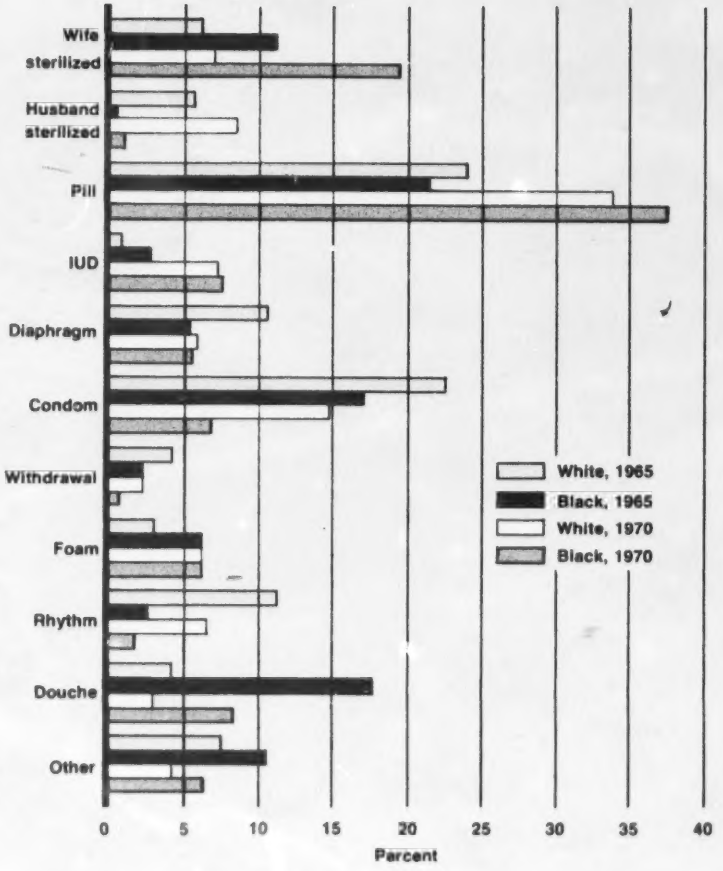
Even more significant than the increase in birth control practitioners has been the switch among black women to more efficient methods of contraception. Between 1965 and 1970 the proportion using oral contraceptives almost doubled while that relying on the husband's use of the condom fell from 17 percent to about 7 percent. The most startling discovery was the dramatic increase in the proportion of black women who were sterilized for contraceptive reasons. In 1970, almost 20 percent of all black women practicing birth control had been sterilized, but only 1 percent of black men had had vasectomies. In contrast, 7.5 percent of white women and 8.3 percent of white men had been sterilized (see Fig. 5). Westoff comments that "This difference probably reflects a combination of differences between whites and blacks in the role of the woman in the control of fertility."[72] Such a conclusion is reinforced when it is considered that both male-originating forms of birth control (condom and withdrawal) are used less by blacks than by whites.

Possible Demographic Results

Lowered family-size expectations among black women combined with increased use of efficient contraceptives almost certainly means a continuation of the present trend toward lower black fertility. Does this mean that some of the views discussed earlier, such as fear of becoming an obscure minority or of "genocide," are supported by demographic trends?

Demographer Ernest B. Attah of Atlanta University has constructed various mathematical models of the future U.S. population using certain

Figure 5. Percent Changes in Types of Contraceptives Used by Married Couples, by Race, 1965 and 1970



Note: Some methods are counted if they are used in combination with others.

Source: Westoff, Charles F., "The Modernization of U.S. Contraceptive Practice," *Persepectives*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (July 1972) p. 11.

fertility, mortality, and migration assumptions.[73] Attah first assumes that the society is moving toward eventual zero population growth. His purpose is to calculate the effects of different paths (for blacks and whites) to this goal. Assuming no migration and a gradual decline in mortality among blacks to almost match that of whites, he finds that:

- If both groups immediately attained replacement-level fertility (i.e., as of 1965-1970), the proportion black would increase from 12 percent to 14 percent by the year 2035. This is because the black population has a larger proportion than the white of young people in or approaching their family-raising years.
- If white fertility did not reach replacement level until 2050 while black fertility immediately attained that mark, the proportion of blacks in the population would only drop to 9.5 percent by 2050.
- If this was reversed, the proportion black would reach 29.6 percent by the year 2050.

Present statistics on fertility indicate that the proportion of blacks in the population by the year 2050 will fall somewhere between Attah's first and second models. As long as white fertility remains at replacement level (and it is actually lower at the present time), the black proportion will actually increase over the next few decades.

The argument suggesting that blacks could become an infinitesimal portion of the population if they limit their fertility is demographically unfeasible. Attah cites an extreme example: Assume that black mortality does not improve and that black fertility drops below replacement to an average of 1.8 children per woman; assume further that white mortality improves and that white fertility increases slightly. In the year 2050 blacks would still be 9.3 percent of the total population.

Thus there is little demographic evidence that suggests even a decline in the proportion of nonwhites in the total population. In reality, the opposite will no doubt occur. Black fertility will not reach replacement for some time while white fertility is already below that mark. Despite certain increments to the white population through migration, it seems reasonable to project that the proportion nonwhite will increase to at least 15 percent by the turn of the century.

Outlook

The inescapable conclusion at present is that black women are more influenced in the practice or rejection of family planning methods by the practical considerations of bearing and raising children than by any abstract political and philosophical questions on either side. But at least some black men may look at issues differently. A New England study indicates that black males under 30 are both more likely to concur with the genocide-conspiracy theory and more hesitant about condoning the limitation of black family size than are older black males.[74] Whether such feelings will be matched by behavior remains to be seen.

Certainly, however, fears of genocide can be expected to continue because black "paranoia" is anchored in reality. Black anxiety about birth control may be partly dissipated by involving black communities in local family planning efforts, by integrating family planning into comprehensive health care programs, and by utilizing black personnel wherever possible. But until America comes to grips with the problems of the black ghettos, until Afro-Americans cease to be economically underprivileged, and until blacks know they have the power to shape their own destinies, fears of genocide are neither unreasonable nor should they be unexpected.

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